

II. Remarks

Support for the various amendments made to the claims herein may be found throughout the application as filed.

On December 19, 2008, Applicant's attorney submitted a Response and Amendment to a September 19, 2008 Office Action (hereafter "Office Action") after conducting a telephone interview with the Examiner. On March 18, 2009, the Examiner issued a Final Office Action, wherein claims 1-4, 6-16 and 18-21 were rejected and claims 5 and 17 were objected to. On March 23, 2009, the Applicant's attorney and the Examiner conducted another telephone interview, wherein the Examiner stated that if the elements and limitations recited in claims 5 and 17 were included in the underlying base independent claims, the amendments made herein would be entered after Final, and that the remaining claims would likely be allowable pending the results of an updated search. Applicant's attorney thanks the Examiner for taking the time and effort to conduct the interview.

The present Amendment after Final is submitted herewith in response to the Final Office Action, and as a follow-up to the interview.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments made herein, and allowance of the claims as they are amended herein.

III. Rejections of Claims Made in the Final Office Action

In the Final Office Action mailed March 18, 2009, the Examiner rejected and objected to claims on the following bases:

- (A) Claims 1, 4, 6-10, 13-16 and 18-21 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,329,111 to Sonoda (hereafter "the Sonoda reference") in view of US Pat. No. 5,633,679 to Hosier (hereafter "the Hosier reference");
- (B) Claims 2, 3, 11 and 12 were rejected as being unpatentable over the Sonoda reference in view of the Hosier reference and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,502,488 to Nagasaki et al. (hereafter "the Nagasaki reference") and U.S. Patent No. 5,508,507 to Nelson et al. (hereafter "the Nelson reference");
- (C) Claims 5 and 17 were objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The foregoing rejections and objections are responded to below, where each response references the letter corresponding to each objection or rejection set forth above.

IV. Responses to Rejections and Objections Made in the Final Office Action

(A) Claim 4 is cancelled herein; claims 1, 6-10, 13-16 and 18-21 are allowable in view of the amendments made thereto.

Claim 4 is cancelled herein, thereby rendering moot the rejection of such claim.

Claims 1, 6-10, 13-16 and 18-21 now include all the limitations of claims 4 and 5, or claim 17, such limitations having been incorporated into base claims 1, 9 and 16. Accordingly, claims 1, 6-10, 13-16 and 18-21 are now in condition for allowance.

(B) Claims 2, 3, 11 and 12 are allowable in view of the amendments made thereto.

Claims 2, 3, 11 and 12 now include all the limitations of claims 4 and 5, or claim 17, such limitations having been incorporated into base claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, 11 and 12 are now in condition for allowance.

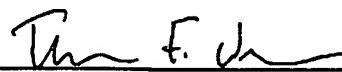
(C) Claims 5 and 17 are amended herein in accordance with the Examiner's requirements.

The limitations of claims 4 and 5, or claim 17, as the case may be, have been incorporated into base claims 1, 19 and 16, thereby rendering allowable all the still-pending claims. Note that claims 4, 5 and 17 have been cancelled.

V. Summary

Claims 1-3, 6-16 and 18-21 as amended herein remain pending in the present application, and are believed to be in condition for allowance. Examination of the application as amended is requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone or e-mail with any questions or comments he may have.

Respectfully submitted
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